

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Environmental Quality
Office of the Secretary
Legal Affairs Division

Oil and Gas Construction Activities Storm Water Waiver
(LAC 33:IX.2511) (WQ069ft)

Under the authority of the Environmental Quality Act, R.S. 30:2001 et seq., and in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:950 et seq., the secretary gives notice that rulemaking procedures have been initiated to amend the Water Quality regulations, LAC 33:IX.2511 (Log #WQ069ft).

This proposed rule is identical to federal regulations found in 71 FR 33628-33640 (June 12, 2006), which are applicable in Louisiana. For more information regarding the federal requirement, contact the Regulation Development Section at (225) 219-3550 or Box 4302, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4302. No fiscal or economic impact will result from the proposed rule; therefore, the rule will be promulgated in accordance with R.S. 49:953(F)(3) and (4).

This rule implements the June 12, 2006, revision to 40 CFR 122 (71 FR 33628-33640), which modifies the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations to provide that certain storm water discharges from field activities or operations, including construction, associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, or treatment operations or transmission facilities are exempt from NPDES permit requirements. The Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Services, became the NPDES permit issuing authority for the State of Louisiana on August 27, 1996. This rule is necessary in order to comply with federal regulations that require the LPDES program to be consistent with the EPA NPDES program. The basis and rationale for this rule are to mirror the federal regulations.

This proposed rule meets an exception listed in R.S. 30:2019(D)(2) and R.S. 49:953(G)(3); therefore, no report regarding environmental/health benefits and social/economic costs is required. This proposed rule has no known impact on family formation, stability, and autonomy as described in R.S. 49:972.

A public hearing will be held on August 24, 2006, at 1:30 p.m. in the Galvez Building, Oliver Pollock Conference Room, 602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Interested persons are invited to attend and submit oral comments on the proposed amendments. Should individuals with a disability need an accommodation in order to participate, contact Judith A. Schuerman, Ph.D., at the address given below or at (225) 219-3550. Parking in the Galvez Garage is free with a validated parking ticket.

All interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the proposed regulation. Persons commenting should reference this proposed regulation by WQ069ft. Such comments must be received no later than August 24, 2006, at 4:30 p.m., and should be sent to Judith A.

Schuerman, Ph.D., Office of the Secretary, Legal Affairs Division, Box 4302, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4302 or to FAX (225) 219-3582 or by e-mail to judith.schuerman@la.gov. The comment period for this rule ends on the same date as the public hearing. Copies of this proposed regulation can be purchased by contacting the DEQ Public Records Center at (225) 219-3168. Check or money order is required in advance for each copy of WQ069ft. This regulation is available on the Internet at www.deq.louisiana.gov under Rules and Regulations.

This proposed regulation is available for inspection at the following DEQ office locations from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.: 602 N. Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802; 1823 Highway 546, West Monroe, LA 71292; State Office Building, 1525 Fairfield Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71101; 1301 Gadwall Street, Lake Charles, LA 70615; 111 New Center Drive, Lafayette, LA 70508; 110 Barataria Street, Lockport, LA 70374; 645 N. Lotus Drive, Suite C, Mandeville, LA 70471.

Herman Robinson, CPM
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Title 33

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Part IX. Water Quality

Subpart 2. The Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) Program

Chapter 25. Permit Application and Special LPDES Program Requirements

§2511. Storm Water Discharges

A. – A.1.e.iv. ...

2. The state administrative authority may not require a permit for discharges of storm water runoff from the following:

a. ~~mining operations or oil and gas exploration, production, processing or treatment operations or transmission facilities, composed entirely of flows that which are from conveyances or systems of conveyances (including but not limited to pipes, conduits, ditches, and channels) used for collecting and conveying precipitation runoff and that which are not contaminated by contact with, or that have has not come into contact with, any overburden, raw material, intermediate products, finished product, byproduct, or waste products located on the site of such operations, except in accordance with Subparagraph C.1.d of this Section;~~ and

b. all field activities or operations associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, or treatment operations or transmission facilities, including activities necessary to prepare a site for drilling and for the movement and placement of drilling equipment, whether or not such field activities or operations may be considered to be construction activities, except in accordance with Subparagraph C.1.c of this Section. Discharges of sediment from construction activities associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, or treatment operations or transmission facilities are not subject to the provisions of Clause C.1.c.iii of this Section.

[Note to Subparagraph A.2.b: The department encourages operators of oil and gas field activities or operations to implement and maintain Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize discharges of pollutants, including sediment, in storm water both during and after construction activities to help ensure protection of surface water quality during storm events. Appropriate controls would be those suitable to the site conditions and consistent with generally accepted engineering design criteria and manufacturer specifications. Selection of BMPs could also be affected by seasonal or climate conditions.]

A.3. – E.7.c. ...

8. ~~Any storm water discharge associated with small construction activities identified in Subparagraph B.15.a of this Section, other than discharges associated with small construction activity at oil and gas exploration, production, process, and treatment operations or transmission facilities, requires permit authorization by March 10, 2003, unless designated for coverage before then. Discharges associated with small construction activity at such oil and gas sites require permit authorization by June 12, 2006.~~

E.9. – G.4.d, certification. ...

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 30:2001 et seq., and in particular Section 2074(B)(3) and (B)(4).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Water Resources, LR 21:945 (September 1995), amended LR 23:957 (August 1997), amended by the Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Planning Division, LR 26:2273 (October 2000), LR 26:2552 (November 2000), repromulgated LR 27:40 (January 2001), amended LR 28:467 (March 2002), LR 29:701 (May 2003), repromulgated LR 30:230 (February 2004), amended by the Office of Environmental Assessment, LR 31:1321 (June 2005), amended by the Office of the Secretary, Legal Affairs Division, LR 31:2510 (October 2005), LR 32:**.